

## T H E   L O D G E.

A LODGE is understood to be the room or place in which a regularly constituted body of Freemasons assembles for work and the transaction of business connected with the Institution. The term is also used to designate the collection of Masons thus assembled, just as we use the word "church" to signify the building in which a congregation of worshippers meet, as well as the congregation itself.

A Lodge is defined to be an assembly of Masons, *just*, *perfect*, and *regular*, who together meet to expatiate on the beauties and mysteries of the Order, and to add new material to the sacred work. It is *just*, because it contains the volume of the Sacred Law unfolded, together with the square and compasses; *perfect*, having the required number of members present to transact business in a regular and constitutional manner, and *regular*, from its warrant of constitution, which implies that it meets and works under the sanction of the legal Masonic authority of the jurisdiction in which the Lodge is held, subject to its by-laws and the general regulations. It is either particular or general, and will be best understood by attending it.—*Charges of 1722.*

## FORMATION OF LODGES.

No Lodge is recognized at the present day unless it has emanated from a Grand Lodge, and works in obedience to the regulations of its parent. Whatever may be the status of a Mason irregularly made, no countenance is given to an irregular (clandestine) Lodge.

Lodges, according to the American system, are recog-

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nized of two kinds, distinct in their character, and working under distinct and separate authority : the first, *Under Dispensation* from the Grand Master ; the second, *Under Warrant* (charter) from the Grand Lodge. Their powers and authority will be separately considered.

### LODGE UNDER DISPENSATION.

In the formation of a new Lodge, which is technically termed a *Lodge under Dispensation*, a petition signed by not less than seven Master Masons in good standing is presented to the Grand Master, or other officer having authority to grant dispensations. There must be good reason for the organization of the Lodge at that time and place. The place of meeting must be designated, and the names of the first three officers stated. The petition must be recommended by the nearest chartered Lodge (in some States all the Lodges whose territory would be reduced), which must certify that the officers proposed are qualified to confer the degrees and give the lectures, etc.

### POWERS OF A LODGE UNDER DISPENSATION.

The powers of a Lodge under dispensation are such as may be prescribed by the local regulations in force in the jurisdiction where it is located. The petitioners for the new Lodge must give notice to the old Lodge that they have signed such petition, and pay all dues to that time ; but (in the most of States) they are not required to dimit from the Lodge until the charter is granted. This, however, like other rules, is subject to local regulations. Usually a Lodge U. D. has the same authority as a warranted Lodge except holding elections and installing officers.

### CHARTERED LODGES.

The powers, duties and privileges of a subordinate Lodge are such as are defined by its charter. by the consti-

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tutions and general regulations of the Grand Lodge, and the ancient landmarks. They are divided into—

I. EXECUTIVE.—In the direction and performance of its work under the control of its Master, and in all other matters in sustaining the Master, who has the primary executive power of the Lodge.

II. LEGISLATIVE.—Embracing all matters relating to its internal concerns not in derogation of the ancient landmarks, the constitutions and general regulations of the Grand Lodge, or of its own particular by-laws ; and

III. JUDICIAL.—Embracing the exercise of discipline and settlement of controversies between and over all its members (except the Master), and over all Masons and non-affiliated brethren within its jurisdiction, subject to an appeal to the Grand Lodge.

The powers of a chartered Lodge are divided into INHERENT and CORPORATE.

A Lodge by virtue of its inherent rights, as defined by ancient landmarks, established usages of Masonry, and when recognized by a Grand Lodge, has the power : 1. To retain its charter until lawfully surrendered, suspended, or revoked ; 2. To fix its time and place (if not outside of the place named in the charter) of meetings ; 3. To meet and do all the work of craft Masonry ; 4. To elect and initiate members, and reject any application for membership ; 5. To elect and install its officers ; 6. To make laws requiring its members to contribute to its funds ; 7. To instruct its representatives, for their government, at all communications of the Grand Lodge ; 8. To place on trial, for cause, its own members, sojourners, and unaffiliated Masons living within its jurisdiction ; 9. To appeal to the Grand Master or Grand Lodge from the decision of the Master ; 10. To make by-laws for its local government.

The corporate rights of a Lodge are conferred by its charter, and by the powers thereof they are entitled : 1. To

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representation in all communications of the Grand Lodge ; 2. To protection while in the lawful exercise of its inherent rights ; and 3. To the enjoyment of all powers conferred by the Grand Lodge upon any constituent Lodge.

### FORFEITURE OF CHARTER.

The acts for which a charter may be forfeited and the Lodge dissolved are : 1. Contumacy to the authority of the Grand Master or Grand Lodge ; 2. Departure from the original plan of Masonry, and a violation of the ancient landmarks ; 3. Disobedience of the constitutions ; 4. Ceasing to meet for one year or more ; 5. Admitting clandestine Masons, or initiating known immoral candidates.

### SURRENDERING THE CHARTER.

A Lodge may be dissolved by the voluntary surrender of its charter by its members, after special summons for that purpose, unless the minority opposed to such surrender consist of seven or more members, that number being the constitutional complement to *receive*, hence that number may *retain* the charter. This rule is now of almost universal practice in the United States.

### SUSPENDING THE CHARTER.

The Grand Master may, for cause, arrest the charter of a Lodge, not to extend beyond the next annual communication of the Grand Lodge. Such suspension for the time arrests the work of the Lodge and prevents its meetings, but does not affect the Masonic standing of its members nor destroy the legality of its charter.

### DUTIES OF A LODGE.

A Lodge by its acceptance of a charter, and its officers and members by their several Masonic obligations, are sacredly bound to obey the laws of Masonry. The duties of a Lodge, therefore, are : 1. To observe and preserve the

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ancient usages of Masonry ; 2. To obey the constitution and regulations of the Grand Lodge ; 3. To render the Grand Master or his deputy all due respect and obedience ; 4. Respectfully to hear all official communications from the Grand Lodge, the Grand Master, or any officer acting by their authority ; 5. To be properly represented at the annual communications of the Grand Lodge ; 6. To possess the proper jewels, clothing, etc., and a suitable seal ; 7. To provide for its meetings a safe and suitable Lodge room ; 8. To make, through its Secretary, the annual reports of its work and condition to Grand Lodge, and punctually to pay its annual dues.

For a persistent or inexcusable neglect by a Lodge, or of its officers, of any of the duties imposed ; and for any deliberate violation of its obligations to Masonry or to the authority of the Grand Lodge or the edicts of the Grand Master, the charter thereof may be suspended or revoked.

### AUTHORITY OVER SUSPENDED MASONS.

A Master Mason having been suspended for unmasonic conduct, and while under such suspension, may, upon new charges for repetition of the first offence, or for any other offence, be tried and expelled, or an additional term of suspension be inflicted if the offence so warrants, by the Lodge having personal jurisdiction over him.

### GOVERNMENT OF THE LODGE.

There is no plainer or more definite law in Masonry than that the Master must preside over his Lodge ; but in case of his absence, from any cause, the Senior Warden, and in the absence of both, the Junior Warden shall summon the Lodge to order, and succeed to all the powers and privileges of the Master, as though the Master himself were present, provided the warrant shall be present. In the absence of the Master or either of the Wardens the Lodge cannot be opened. A Past Master can only preside

when the Master or one of the Wardens is present and opens the Lodge, after which he may call such Past Master to the chair. Whoever occupies the chair legally controls the Lodge. Even the Grand Master, if present, can exercise no authority until he has taken the chair and assumed the gavel.

#### OFFICERS OF A LODGE.

The prosperity, the success, and the usefulness of a Lodge, and its ability to discharge the duties and objects of Freemasonry, depend greatly upon the character and judgment of its officers.

The discipline of a Masonic Lodge, the order observed at its meetings, the obedience there exacted, and cheerfully rendered on the part of the brethren, make its government as nearly perfect as it is possible for any human institution to be. Intelligent and capable officers make good Lodges. It is the imperative duty of the officers of a Lodge to be careful, prudent, and conciliating, positive in requiring obedience to the law ; smoothing down all asperities of manner, spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection ; rendering to every one that due attention which should ever distinguish a band of brothers, and whilst by their own example they exhibit the beauties of the craft, they admonish with kindness, and reprehend with justice. Unity is the mainspring of Freemasonry. Destroy that, and the machinery will fall in pieces. It will be a difficult matter to preserve the links in the chain of unity unbroken, unless the Master pursues an accommodating policy, which may cause the brethren to be mutually pleased with each other's society, accompanied by an inflexible regard to discipline, which, while it allows freedom of action, will preserve inviolable the respectful submission that is due the Chair, as its undoubted and inalienable prerogative.

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The duties, responsibilities and prerogatives of the officers of a Lodge are now well defined (see Part I.), and consist of—1. A Master, who is styled Worshipful ; 2. A Senior Warden ; 3. A Junior Warden ; 4. A Treasurer ; 5. A Secretary ; 6. A Senior Deacon ; 7. A Junior Deacon ; 8. Two Stewards, or two Masters of Ceremonies (sometimes both); 9. A Tyler. In addition to the above, many Lodges are provided with a Chaplain, Marshal, Organist, and Board of Trustees.

### PAST MASTERS.

By the term Past Masters, it must be understood to allude to those who have been legally elected Masters of chartered Lodges, served their term of office, and are recognized as *Actual* Past Masters, and who are distinguished from those who have been seated in the *chair* in a Royal Arch Chapter. Their privileges are such as may be expressly given by the Constitution of the Grand Lodge, and, in addition, they are qualified to install any Master elect, when requested to do so, and to be present at the qualification of a Master elected to the chair.

A Past Master is always eligible to re-election, without further service, to any office in the Lodge of which he is a member.

He is eligible as a proxy or representative of the Grand Master to perform any duty when that officer cannot attend.

As a courtesy, a Past Master is entitled to a seat in the east on the right of the acting Master.

A Chapter or *virtual* Past Master has no rights in a subordinate Lodge, and consequently cannot install a newly elected Master, or be present at the conferring of the Past Master's degree. This rule, however, is local, limited to a portion of the State jurisdictions.

Every Master Mason in good standing is the peer of a Past Master in matters of discipline, etc.